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Russia : the Struggle for Power

There are increasing signs of deep policy differences among the Russian leaders. Some observers see evidence of this in recent Russian moves over West Germany where 'dovish' gestures have been followed by 'hawkish' ones. The appeal for a European security conference, issued on 17 March, was conciliatory. There were no references to West Germany's 'militarism' or 'neo-nazism', which are a normal part of the Russian political vocabulary. This was very much in line with the conciliatory attitude the Russians displayed in the Berlin crisis earlier this year. But more recent Russian statements have been full of invective on West Germany. Last week, *Pravda* reported a long government statement on the subject, which was three-quarters abuse. It was as though the hawks had succeeded in writing in the bellicose phrases that the doves had managed to edit out earlier.

Russian policy over Czechoslovakia shows much the same pattern. The first reaction was relatively mild, but then with Marshal Grechko's trip to Prague, pressure increased, though the hawks did not force in the full military government which they have wanted since last summer. But the hard-liners do seem to have won on points. The fact that it was the Russian defence minister, Marshal Grechko, who brought the Russian ultimatum with him at the beginning of this month was significant, for in similar crises in the past it was always a senior civilian figure like Mr Vassili Kuznetsov, the main trouble-shooter, who dealt with the situation. It is true that the deputy foreign minister, Mr Semyonov, was in Prague with Marshal Grechko